

Did Srila Prabhupada want

Women Diksa-gurus?

Eye of the Sastra Vs. Eye of the Storm

A Refutation to the book by Kaunteya Dās (project co-ordinator) with the same name

By, Sridhara Srinivasa Dasa (BVKS)

A Short Summary

By Damodara Dasa (BVKS)

**"A brahmana sees through the sastras.
A king sees through his spies.
A cow sees through its nose.
And, an ordinary man sees through his eyes."
(Canakya Pandit)**

“Did Śrīla Prabhupāda Want Women *Dīkṣā-gurus*?”

Eye of the “Śāstra” Vs. Eye of the storm

A Refutation to the book by Kaunteya Dās (project co-ordinator) with the same name

Author: Śrīdhara Śrīnivāsa dās

Śrīdhara Śrīnivāsa dāsa born in a traditional Śrī Vaiṣṇava lineage, was brought up in a traditional Tamil Nadu Iyēṅār family, practicing vaiṣṇava culture, duly received *upanayana samskāra* by his parents at the age of nine. The author has a bachelor’s degree in engineering in 1994, a Master’s degree in business administration from a reputed university in Seattle and work experience of working in the position of General Manager in several software firms in Japan, USA, and India. However, while living in the USA, inspired by the teachings of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* ISKCON, was initiated in September, 2006 into the Gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* by His Holiness Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, a *sannyāsi* disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Following the instructions of his spiritual master, he along with his family is serving full-time the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda by distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books among the general populace and also preaching the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīdhara Śrīnivāsa Dāsa is the author of a book *A Divine Prophecy, a Śrī Vaiṣṇava prophecy on Lord Caitanya*, released in English and Tamil. He has also authored articles on a variety of topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness ranging from philosophical debates to describing the holy places and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa that were featured in the Tamil edition of “back to godhead” magazine.

contact: sridhara.srinivasa.das.bvks@gmail.com

ph: (+91)-7373089272

Short Summary (2020-09-20)

Written by Dāmodara dās

Dāmodara dās a full-time initiated disciple by His Holiness Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, a *sannyāsi* disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of ISKCON. Following the instructions of his spiritual master, he is serving full-time the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the field of developing *daivi-varṇāśrama* farm communities. Dāmodara dās is the author of a book, “*Vaiṣṇava-dīkṣā according to Nārada-pañcarātra, Can a Female Devotee be a Dīkṣā-guru?*”, *Bhakti Vikas Trust, 2019*.”. He has also authored several articles on a variety of topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which are available on his personal blog site.

Blog: <https://guru-sadhu-sastra.blogspot.com>

contact: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

ph: (+91)-9737475085

The words Conversation, Lecture, Letter, and purport indicate quotations taken from published editions by or involving Śrīla Prabhupāda. Conversation subsumes all types of discussions with Śrīla Prabhupāda, variously classified by the Bhaktivedanta Archives as Morning Walks, Press Conferences, Room Conversations, etc. All such quotations are copyrighted by The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc.

© 2020 Bhagavata Shikshan Evam Gauraksha Trust

All rights reserved

ISBN

No part of this document shall be reproduced, re-used, shared, copied, or re-distributed in partial or full form in any format without the exclusive permission of the publishers. In case anyone is interested in getting a copy of the book or more details they may contact the authors.

Contents

Introduction

1. Bold claims by the authors which are outrightly false

- "So far we have not seen even a single clear statement from any śāstra prohibiting women from initiating disciples,"
- "There is no rule preventing ladies from becoming dīkṣā-gurus in the pāñcarātrika system"
- "Wearing the sacred thread had not been a fixed fixture in the brāhmaṇas' attire throughout the ages; 'the upavita was not used.'"
- "wearing or holding the upavīta thread is not integral to chanting Gāyatrī mantras"
- Women in Vedic Culture wore sacred thread (Parvati Statue with sacred thread)
--> Atheism in author's work expose in Parvati debacple

2. Outright misleading and cheating by hiding evidences against FDGs

- "It is not that women cannot become ācārya." (hiding "Generally they do not become. In very special case")
- Sacred Thread & women's being brahmana (hiding anti-feminist part from Srila Prabhupada's speech)

3. Foolishness & total lack of Vedic Culture's knowledge and experience

- "Even Lord Brahma, the head of our sampradaya, was initiated by a woman," Sarasvati

4. Mis-representing the words of Scholars of Other sampradayas

- M.A. Laksami Thathacharya, Sri Sampradaya said they had FDG in their parampara

5. Faulty and dangerous Hermeneutics:

- SP Books are not always the final authority. "When taken out of context, certain passages in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books might generate confusion and even false conclusions."
- Let us have a Trial allowing FDGs; in case it fails, we can revert back our decision anytime
- Srila Prabhupada is final pramana — divorcing him from sastra

6. Directly confronting Srila Prabhupada's stance on some matters

- The authors Water down SP's criticism of Caste Goswamis, to legitimize FDGs practiced in apasampradayas

7. The Dīkṣā lineage of Bhaktivinoda Thākura has 3 FDGs

8. Allowing FDGs doesn't harm protection of women

9. Authority of Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā as Nārada-pañcarātra

10. The Suniti Argument

Authors say:

- Real reason for her not being diksa-guru was being realted with him as mother, and not being a woman
- Suniti was in Satya yuga where women were not allowed to become diksa-guru. Now, no problem
- Suniti's case was in Satya-yuga, when initiation medhod followed was Vaidika wherein women didn't even get initiation what to speak of becoming guru. However, now in pancaratrika method women can get initiation and thus they can give also.
- That Suniti could not become Dhruva's diksa-guru is merely a description of an incident that took place in bygone ages. It is a "descriptive" statement and not the "prescriptive" one for ISKCON to follow.

Short Summary

Invocation

**dvaipāyano bhagavān aprabodhād
kalkiḥ kaleḥ kāla-malāt prapātu**

**buddhas tu pāṣaṇḍa-gaṇa-pramādāt
dharmāvanāyoru-kṛtāvatāraḥ**

May the Personality of Godhead in His incarnation as Vyāsadeva protect me from all kinds of ignorance resulting from the absence of Vedic knowledge. May Lord Buddhadeva protect me from activities opposed to Vedic principles and from laziness that causes one to madly forget the Vedic principles of knowledge and ritualistic action. May Kalkideva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appeared as an incarnation to protect religious principles, protect me from the dirt of the Age of Kali. [SB 6.8.19]

Introduction

“Did Śrīla Prabhupāda Want Women Dīkṣā-gurus? Eye of the storm,” a book by Kaunteya Dāsa (project co-ordinator) has indeed created a storm in the Vaiṣṇava community ever since it was published back in 2013. This book claims to be the first of its kind to compile all the viewpoints on this topic presented in balanced manner. It is accepted as “authentic” book by some of the esteemed members of the ISKCON GBC, some of whom heavily quoted from it in the MGM 2019 at Tirupati, which contributed to the current FDG resolution GBC passed with a slender majority. However, there are many devotees who are skeptical about this book and thus, after a span of seven years, better late than never, it is important for the devotee community of ISKCON to review the contents of this book from the eye of “śāstra, sādhu, and guru” instead of looking at it from the “eye of the storm.” (pun intended) This book, first of many parts of refutations to follow, is our humble attempt in this direction.

1. Bold claims by the authors¹ which are outrightly false

➤ **p.31² — “So far we have not seen even a single clear statement from any śāstra prohibiting women from initiating disciples,” say the authors**

- Nārada-pañcarātra, BS 1.42-43 says **na jātu mantra-dā nārī** — women can never becoming initiating gurus; and **nārahanty-ācāryatām kvacit** — women are never eligible to become *dīkṣā-guru*.
- SB 4.12.32, Purport — “According to *śāstric* injunctions, there is no difference between *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru*, and generally the *śikṣā-guru* later on becomes the *dīkṣā-guru*. **Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja’s *dīkṣā-guru*.**”
- Even if the authors were not aware of this verse from Nārada-pañcarātra (NP), on p.22, they say:

if anyone can submit better scriptural evidences, better historical references, better quotes, better reasoning, better arguments, and – therefore – a better conclusion, we are completely open to consider publishing a new book. It’s not a challenge; it’s an invitation and a promise.

- Evidences from Nārada-pañcarātra have been published for last 2 years. But till date, they widely distribute their book without updating untrue statements and all faulty claims. This certainly raises a question on their intellectual integrity and overall authenticity of the book itself.

➤ **p.40 — “There is no rule preventing ladies from becoming dīkṣā-gurus in the pañcarātrika system”**

- Falsehood. The authors did not even try search into Nārada-pañcarātra,³ Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā (BS):
**na jātu mantra-dā nārī na śūdro nāntarodbhavaḥ |
nābhīśasto na patitaḥ kāmakāmo’pyakāmināḥ ||1.42||**

¹ Because there is not author/s mentioned, we will write “the authors” instead

² p.<page no.> means that particular page number in Kaunteya Dāsa’s book; Text in Quotes (”) is by the authors

³ The foremost of all pañcarātras and much endorsed by Srila Prabhupada

“Even then, a woman, a śūdra and an antyaja can never act as an initiating guru, nor can anyone who is accused of a great sin or is fallen. And an aspiring disciple who is already accomplished in detachment (akāmī) should never accept a guru who is infected with material desires.”

striyaḥ śūdrādayaś caiva bodhayeyur hitāhitam |

yathārham mānanīyaś ca nārhyantya ācāryatām kvacit ||1.43||

“Women, śūdras, etc., can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the position of ācārya.”

➤ **p.233 — “Wearing the sacred thread had not been a fixed fixture in the brāhmaṇas’ attire throughout the ages; ‘the upavīta was not used.’” (The authors also quote Smṛti-candrikā for support).**

- However, Smṛti-candrikā, Saṁskāra-kāṇḍa, p.83 says the opposite:
One who has been duly initiated by the Gāyatrī mantra and have yajñopavītam, **should never take it out (un-wear it)** if he is intelligent and desires his ultimate benefit (śreya). If he takes out his upavīta even once then he, the dvija, becomes a subject of penance (meaning sinful).⁴
- Smṛti-candrikā, Saṁskāra-kāṇḍa, p.82 also quotes Paraskara Grihya-sutra 2.2.10:
yajñopavītam (sacred thread) is the best among those that purify; the one that **has emerged along with Brahmā (Prajāpati) at the time of creation**.⁵
- And adds (p.83) that one who doesn’t know about its origin, all his duties become useless:
One who doesn’t know about the origin of *yajña-sūtra* (sacred thread), **all his Vedic works related to yajna-sūtra like bathing, giving of charity, chanting gayatri, etc. become fruitless**. Such a brahmana not knowing the position of *upavīta*, is illusioned and is merely a weight bearer like an animal.⁶
- Smṛti-candrikā, Saṁskāra, p.83 quotes pitāmaha saying that because *upavīta* should always be worn, there are alternatives to the materials available:—**“A twice born should always wear upavīta”**⁷
- Lord Rama always wore Yajñopavīta. Is He of recent origin?
- About 5000 years back Lord Krishna and Balarama received sacred thread:
Then Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were duly initiated with the sacred thread ceremony, and They repeated the chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra. **The Gāyatrī mantra is offered to disciples after the sacred thread ceremony**, and Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa properly discharged the duties of chanting this mantra.⁸

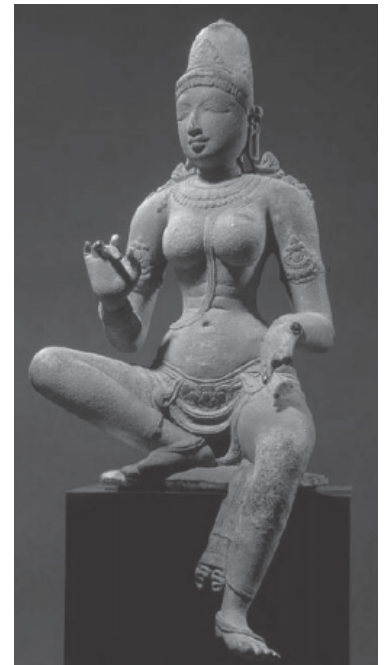
➤ **p.242 — “wearing or holding the upavīta thread is not integral to chanting Gāyatrī mantras.”**

- This claim is already proved wrong above:
One who doesn’t know about the origin of *yajña-sūtra* (sacred thread), all his Vedic works related to *yajna-sūtra* like bathing, giving of charity, **chanting gayatri, etc. become fruitless**.⁹

➤ **p.237-9 —Wearing sacred thread by women was a part of Vedic Culture**

The authors, showing this icon of Pārvatī sculpted during Chola Kingdom, say,

“the sculpture was made by humans living in South India more than a thousand years ago; it shows that their culture was familiar – and apparently comfortable – with the idea of females wearing the sacred thread.”



⁴ mantra-pūtam sthitam kāye yasya yajñopavītakam nōttārayettataḥ prāṇo yadīcchechreya ātmanaḥ || kāyasthameva tai-kāryam-utthāpyam na kadācana sakṛd-uttāraṇāt-tasya prāyāścittī bhavet dvijaḥ ||

⁵ yajñopavītam param pavitram prajā pateryatsahajam purastāt

⁶ ya etam na vijānāti yajña-sūtra-samudbhavam vedoktam niṣphalam tasya snāna-dāna-japādīkam brāhmaṇo yo na jānāti upavītasya samsthithammohātma saḥ bharam paśurgauriva sarvadā

⁷ sadā sambhavatā kāryam-upavītam dvijātibhiḥ

⁸ Krishna Book, 45 (emphasis added)

⁹ ya etam na vijānāti yajña-sūtra-samudbhavam vedoktam niṣphalam tasya snāna-dāna-japādīkam

- This icon is also almost naked (bare chested). Does that mean that women in Chola Kingdom were living naked and that the culture was “apparently comfortable” with the idea of females’ being naked. We may get the idea of authors’ level of intelligence from this.
- Mānasāra, the renowned text on śilpa-śāstra, does mention sacred thread for male deities (50.10) but doesn’t do so for any of the female deities.¹⁰
- There is old commentary by a śilpa-śāstrī V. Venkatasubrahmaniya Sastri, who published a book in Tamil with Mānasāra verses presented in Grantha-lipi. It says that it is probable what appears to be a sacred thread on those iconographs are actually other ornaments such as *Vaikaṣika* that is adorned in a sacred thread fashion. However, this point is still under research and those who want more information and the book scans can contact us.
- Besides this, even if we accept that the icon wears sacred thread, it is worth considering that the deity is that of Pāravatī, a goddess, not a human of mortal world. It is foolish to conclude what applies to gods applies to humans also
- How the people of that time took it? Simple. People understood the fact that “Pāravatī can wear it, we can’t. what is applicable to gods is not to be imitated by humans.”

➤ Ahteism in the authors’ works exposed

- Just have a short look-back. In the first part, the author said that the sacred thread was not a fixed part of brahmana’s attire and in the latter part they say that even the women wore sacred thread showing Pāravatī idol wearing sacred thread.
- Now what’s going on here? If the sacred thread is not an age old tradition then it shows that the authors think **Pāravatī is not from age-old times but is of recent origin.**
- However, śāstras say that Pāravatī is *jagad-dhātṛī*, the creator and maintainer of universe
- This brings us to the platform of atheism which declares that Pāravatī etc. icons as mere imaginations that different cultures depict in their own ways as per the culture they are living in.
- This is contamination resulting from secular atheistic scholarly pursuit
- They opine that because in the Chola Kingdom women wore sacred threads, they depict Pāravatī wearing sacred thread. Sculptors from other cultures depict her in a different way. Thus we can get an idea of a culture by looking at the icons that are sculpted by the people of that culture.
- Some of them use such iconography to prove that women did not cover breasts in Vedic culture.
- However, our devotee friends (the authors), trying to support FDGs, borrowed arguments from the canons of such atheistic scholars and thus ended up with atheism.
- Readers may be reminded of a similar approach by the propounder of Krishna West, who says that Srila Prabhupada depicted Lord Krishna according to Indian culture he was brought up in. He opines that Krishna did not wear dhoti and that dhoti is not necessarily a Vedic dress.
- Besides this, almost all secular atheistic scholars repeatedly use one trick to establish liberalism: quoting one or two exceptional examples from whole Vedic canon to establish them as norm. For instance they give examples of Gārgī and Maitreyī to establish that all women in Vedic culture got upanayana, underwent brahmacharya, and studied the Vedas. What we know now from our acharyas like Śankarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, and our known tradition was actually instituted by evil minded, male dominated, brahmanas, who created many dharma-sastras like Manu-samhita. (see p.240 for such a conclusion reached by the authors).
- However, the vedic method (SB 10.33.31) says,
“The statements of the Lord’s empowered servants are always true, and the acts they perform are exemplary when consistent with those statements. Therefore one who is intelligent should carry out their instructions.”¹¹

¹⁰ Chapter 50 belongs to male deities, Chapter 54 to female deities

¹¹ *īśvarāṇāṁ vacaḥ satyaṁ tathaivācaritaṁ kvacit | teṣāṁ yat sva-vaco-yuktaṁ buddhimāṁs tat samācaret ||*

- Thus, proper method to know anything about the Vedic Culture is to approach those who have lived it and believe in its eternity, who have unflinching faith in *guru-sādhū-sāstra*.

2. Outright misleading and cheating by hiding evidences against FDGs

➤ **“It is not that women cannot become ācārya.”** (hiding “Generally they do not become. In very special case”)

- p.51— the authors outrightly cheat the readers by removing a part of Srila Prabhupada’s conversation which states that women can become *ācāryas* only in very special cases:

Prabhupāda: So a crazy man’s statement is not accepted. Child’s statement, crazy man’s statement, unauthorized person’s statement, blind man’s statement, we cannot accept.

Ātreya Ṛṣi: A woman’s statement?

Prabhupāda: Huh?

Ātreya Ṛṣi: A woman’s...

Prabhupāda: If a woman is perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness... Just like Jāhnavā-devī, Lord Nityānanda’s wife, she was ācārya. She was ācārya. She was controlling the whole Vaiṣṇava community. . . . She was controlling the whole Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community.

Ātreya Ṛṣi: Do you have references about that in any of your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Prabhupāda: I don’t think. But there are many ācāryas. Maybe somewhere I might have mentioned. It is not that woman cannot be ācārya.

~~Generally, they do not become. In very special case. But Jāhnavā-devī was accepted as, but she did not declare.~~

— Room Conversation, San Diego, 29 June 1972

The yellow part is the one that the authors deliberately removed from the quote.

- Why the authors did such a cheating trick? Just before this quote, on p.46-47, the authors mislead readers by saying that Jahnava-devi was not a special case:

Jāhnavādevī wasn’t presented as an exclusive excellent exception, as a personality beyond the beyond that women can never emulate. No, Jāhnavā-devī was mentioned as an illustration of a principle, as a model that normal women could follow.

- So you can understand that 4 pages later how can they allow Srila Prabhupada to contradict what they said. What would you call this besides “cheating?”

➤ **Sacred Thread & women’s being brahmana** (hiding anti-feminist part from Srila Prabhupada’s speech)

- On p.232, quoting SP the authors say that he did not give much importance to the sacred thread:

“Some of the students, boys and girls, will be offered this Gāyatrī mantra. And when the Gāyatrī mantra is offered men, they are offered also sacred thread, and girls, they are not offered sacred thread. . . . So don’t be sorry because you will not be offered the sacred thread. That’s all right.”¹²

- To hide the anti-feminist quote, the authors cleverly coplapsed the part shown below, into ellipses:

“If their husband is a brāhmaṇa, she automatically becomes brāhmaṇa, because wife is considered to be the half, better half. She is the better portion. So she automatically becomes better brāhmaṇa. [laughter] So better brāhmaṇa does not require any thread. There is a Bengali proverb, *ya va nauket poiye darkana naya*[?]. The proverb is that in India if one has got sacred thread, he is immediately understood that he must be belonging to the higher caste, brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiṣya. But if somebody knows that he is brāhmaṇa or kṣatriya, he doesn’t require to show the sacred thread. Similarly, the wives of brāhmaṇa is already known that he [she] is brāhmaṇi, so she does not require to show the sacred thread.”

- SP actually says that women don’t need to become a brahmana separately from husband.

¹² Initiations and Gāyatrī of Devotees, Going to London—August 11, 1968, Montreal

3. Foolishness & total lack of Vedic Culture’s knowledge and experience

➤ p.79—“Even Lord Brahma, the head of our sampradaya, was initiated by a woman,” Sarasvati (authors)

Being initiated by women is neither new nor confined to interactions between humans. **Even Lord Brahmā**, the head of our sampradāya, **at one point was initiated by a “woman,”** a divine feminine personality. As he described in his Brahma-saṁhitā (5.23-24), it happened when Brahmā, coming out of the lotus springing from the navel of Lord Viṣṇu, “could see nothing but darkness in every direction.”

Then the goddess of learning Sarasvatī, the divine consort of the Supreme Lord, said thus to Brahmā who saw nothing but gloom in all directions, “O Brahmā, this mantra, viz., *kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāhā*, will assuredly fulfill your heart’s desire.”

- Yes, Srila Prabhupada and his Guru Maharaj concealed this fact by not involving Sarasvati in our Guru Parampara. A very loyal conclusion !
- Actually, just a few verses later, Brahma-saṁhitā 5.27, you find that it was Lord Krishna who initiated Lord Brahmā in gāyātrī, and Sarasvatī was just instrumental. This is why we do not find Sarasvati in our parampara list.

The lotus-born Brahmā having received the Gāyatrī, sprung from the flute-song of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, attained the status of the twice-born, having been **initiated by the supreme primal preceptor, Godhead Himself.**

- Hypocrisy, foolishness and lack of Vedic Culture on the part of the authors thus exposed.
- Besides this, even if we accept that Sarasvati initiates someone, the authors don’t understand that the rules for gods and for humans are different. Secondly, the authors seem to have the proud idea: “if we, the great women, are forbidden to get initiated into *brahma-gāyatrī* and thus give it being *dīkṣā-gurus*, then goddess Sasrasvatī should also be forbidden to get and give it.”
- Any person (devotee or non-devotee) with some experience of Indian / Vedic culture will laugh at such a proposition. Their speculative idea of using Paravati icon for approving FDGs has already turned into a laughing stalk and atheism.
- Mother Sarasvati is worshipped by all the Vedic scholars since time immemorial for boon of Vedic learning and the authors want to ban her from Vedic access, just because the women on earth have been denied Vedic access; they are on a “MeToo” movement. Such an idea is born from Modern Liberalism & Communist Marxism that believes in equal rights.

4. Mis-representing the words of Scholars of Other sampradayas

➤ p.32-33— M.A. Laksami Thathacharya, Sri Sampradaya said they had FDG in their parampara

- The authors completely mis-represent M.A. Laksami Thathacharya, a renowned scholar from Sri Sampradaya and long standing well wisher of ISKCON. They quote him:

Another scholar, Professor M.A. Lakshmi Thathachar, of the Academy of Sanskrit Research in Melkote, Karnataka, speaking on behalf of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya (Śrī Vaiṣṇavism), said the following:

[Interview by Sudhir Caitanya dāsa] Question: Is there any history of female dīkṣā-guru in your sampradāya? If so, where and why? If not, why not?
Answer: Āṇḍāl, the celebrated wife of Kureśa, was an ideal Śrī Vaiṣṇava woman, ācāryāṇī. She used to guide students on the spiritual path. Among the Śrī Vaiṣṇava saints, Āṇḍāl, the spiritual daughter of Periyālvār or Viṣṇucitta, ranks high. Her composition, Tiruppāvai, is considered to be the epitome of the entire Vedas.

- However, the same prof. M. A. Lakshmi Thathachar, in early 2019, wrote a letter of concern and an appeal to the GBC to not pass the FDG resolution and start adharmā:

In the history of ISKCON if there is shistacara of mantropadesa by women then acharyanis are free to do mantropadesa. There could be some exceptional cases which

might have happened due to the demands of time (āpat-kāle-nāsti-maryādā). Exceptions should not become the general rule. Since there is no crisis as to introduce acharyanis to initiate, this should not be considered a serious issue at present.

If ISKCON, an internationally famous organization, goes against shistacara and be successful, probably the other schools of Vedanta like Ramanuja, Vallabha, Nimbarka, etc, may follow suit, which results the practice of violating the shistacara and not desirable. I wish ISKCON, an internationally reputed organization will not establish a new shistacara violating all the shistacaras practiced even today in all the schools of Vedanta.¹³

- Being a long standing well wisher of ISKCON, Srīman Thathachar officially sent this letter to the GBC, who, instead of responding (or at least acknowledging) it, fully disregarded it and got very displeased by his act. Thathachar was very displeased by this neglect on the part of the GBCs.
- The video of interview with Laksami Thathachar is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pknPHOW6zZ4>. You can see that the Thathachar speaks many things including Āṇḍāl and her position in Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, quoting her as a very special example, not to be imitated. But the authors cleverly cut out other parts and present only few lines which reverses the intended message.

5. Faulty and dangerous Hermeneutics:

Statements from Srīla Prabhupada's books can be of lower authority than those of his letters and conversations; Trial and Error Method.

➤ **p.43— “when taken out of context, certain passages in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books might generate confusion and even false conclusions.”** Example: In NoD 8, Srīla Prabhupada says that all devotees should start worshipping Ganapati. But when personally asked he denied to do this. Thus, if we would have depended on SP books only and not on letters then clear instruction was to worship Ganapati.

- In order to conclude that we should not worship Ganapati, we do not need to resort to the letters of Srīla Prabhupada, which he himself said should not be distributed lest it may act reversely.¹⁴ The matter is solved from within the books of Srīla Prabhupada
- Srīla Prabhupada, at many other places in his books itself, condemned demigod worship and has said at many places that **demigods are automatically worshipped by worshipping the guru and Acyuta (Lord Krishna)**.¹⁵ He has also established the program of Guru-pūjā in ISKCON. Because Srīla Prabhupada and Lord Krishna are daily worshipped in ISKCON, it is justified that the instruction of NoD to worship Ganapati is already fulfilled. Thus, you do not need to resort to SP's lectures, conversations and letters to clarify what he said in his books.
- Srīla Prabhupada said “if you want to know me, read my books” and that “Whatever I have wanted to say, I have said in my books.”¹⁶ Not that “if you want to know me, read my letters or study my audio transcripts”
- **Authority of Srīla Prabhupada's Books is above that of Audio Transcripts:**

When Srīla Prabhupada was asked about transcribing his audio recordings, he commented:

“This is not necessary. My books are sufficient. Let all of my disciples read my books. This idea is over-burden. It will mean too many readings. Let them read whatever is there and digest it. **Everything I have wanted to say I have said in my books.** This will only be superfluous. Tell him to **concentrate on reading my books, not on studying such**

¹³ Full letter available at : https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YaBZ_VewFhzMlMypgzbl0pSTTJCi6wuj/view?usp=sharing

¹⁴ “.. I shall request you not to circulate all my letters that I address to you. Letters are sometimes personal and confidential, and if all letters are circulated, it may react reversely. (Letter to Brahmananda, 28 Sep. 1969)

¹⁵ For instance SB 10.1.56, purport

¹⁶ From TKG's Diary, June 9, 1977

transcriptions. Does he think he will find something else in these transcriptions that are not in my books?" ...

Actually you should know that Prabhupada's books are better than His speeches. This is because He concentrates tremendously and chooses each word when He writes these books. This is not my opinion but He Himself has said this to me.¹⁷

- **Authority of Srila Prabhupada's books is above that of his Letters also**

".. I shall request you not to circulate all my letters that I address to you. Letters are sometimes personal and confidential, and if all letters are circulated, it may react reversely. I have already got some hints like that with letters I sent to you regarding Kirtanananda and Hayagriva. So in the future please do not circulate my letters to you. All my letters to you should be considered as confidential, and if you want at all to circulate, you just ask me before doing so."¹⁸

- **Thus, Books are the Basis, not Audio Transcripts or Letters**

Books, Lectures, Conversations, Letters – this should be the precedence of authority among SP's instructions. Which means that if there is a conflict between a statement from Srila Prabhupada's books with that of his lectures, conversations, or letters, then the direct meaning of his book statement should be kept intact while the conflicting statement from the other source has to be interpreted in order to synchronize with the that of the book.

- The very basis of author's analysis process is thus flawed and his conclusions thus refuted.

➤ **p.21—Let us have a Trial allowing FDGs; in case it fails, we can revert back our decision anytime**

If having women *dīkṣā-gurus* is good idea – in line with *sādhū*, *śāstra* and guru – some good result will come of it. If it isn't such a good idea, the future will tell; posterity, statistics, the fossil record, revelations through dreams, God... somebody will show it; and ISKCON can always modify its course.

- They fail to consider that some decisions are irreversible. "I will try smoking cigarettes; if there is bad result I can always decide to abstain from it." But after one gets cancer, it is too late.
- Please notice that the authors' statement do not mention *śāstras* or *sādhū*s as a source of revelation for the idea's being bad. They give more credence to statistics, fossil record, revelations through dreams (is is sentimental), God directly telling, etc. but will not accept God's message coming through *śāstras*, *sādhū*s and gurus. Those who subscribe to this argument are infected by empiricism, an inseparable part of modern atheistic theology and culture. Fools learn by experience.
- What if there are effects which cannot be seen in this lifetime but are revealed in the next? Afterall, our whole process of Krishna Consciousness is for improving our existence in next life.
- For instance, not imposing to follow the 4th regulative principle won't show much bad effect in this life, but will certainly show big benefits in preaching mission. Does that mean instituting it is a right idea? What is the harm?
- There are many *apa-sampradaya*s who flourish and never find any problem with their way of thought and action. *Sahajiyas* are still there and they are satisfied. But are they right?
- However, as per *guru-sādhū-śāstra*, in the next life all these sinful, so called devotees, will have to see hell or degradation. By instituting something that will send followers to hell, ISKCON would be responsible for mass scale harm to the society. However, that harm will go un-detected because we are unable to see followers' destination after death.
- Nārada-pañcarātra (BS 1.59-60) says:

If one surrenders to a woman, *śūdra*, *saṅkīrṇa* (one of mixed birth), one who has not accepted an *ācārya*, or a sinful and fallen person, his initiation is useless or as if not

¹⁷ Letter from Tamal Krishna Gosvami, Vrndavana, July 20, 1977

¹⁸ Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter to Brahmananda, 28 September, 1969 (emphasis added)

done. This is so even if he takes shelter with unalloyed attitude. **Such a disciple should quickly take shelter of another spiritual master who is bona fide** according to rules and regulations. **A foolish person (as described in 59th verse), who becomes spiritual master by giving mantras, falls down.**¹⁹

- Thus the “Trial and Error” method authors are proposing is not only empiricist and atheistic but also very dangerous. If we subscribe to it, then, down the line, we will implement it in various other fields and issues, loosening our attachment to evidence of *guru-sādhū-śāstra*. This means total destruction of our connection with the parampara—in polite words—ISKCON will be an *apa-sampradāya*.
- Besides this, even seeing from the empiric data, we have seen much bad results of implementing the western egalitarian ethos in ISKCON. It is a well known fact that in the West, ISKCON has more deities than devotees in temples and aratis, thanks to the Western liberalism. However, ISKCON India, which is still more “Indian” in culture, is flourishing and booming with devotees and preaching. Thus, ISKCON India’s ideas should be given precedence over those of ISKCON West, because ISKCON India is successful while ISKCON West has failed.
- My proposal is, why not try on the side of *guru-sādhū-śāstra*, and not have FDGs, and then see the results down the course of a few generations. If we succeed then we have established that *guru-sādhū-śāstras* are always right and thus increased our followers’ faith. If we fail than at the least we have pleased our parampara and SP trying to strictly follow them.

➤ **Srila Prabhupada is final pramana — mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ**

- p.24-25—Certainly the great personality, the authority ISKCON devotees should follow, and whose statements they should accept as conclusive, is Śrīla Prabhupāda. Any interpretation, opinion or belief should be weighed against the Founder-Ācārya’s instructions.
- If the authors really believe it, then why do they not “accept as conclusive” SB 4.12.32, purport, “However Suniti, being a woman, specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Maharaja’s dikṣa-guru.” Is it not “the Founder-Ācārya’s instruction?”
- Also, our Founder-Ācārya, Srila Prabhupada, quoting Narottama Dasa Thakura, says:
One should accept a thing as genuine by studying the words of saintly people, the spiritual master and the *śāstra*. **The actual center is the *śāstra*, the revealed scripture.** If a spiritual master does not speak according to the revealed scripture, he is not to be accepted. Similarly, if a saintly person does not speak according to the *śāstra*, he is not a saintly person. **The *śāstra* is the center for all.** (Cc. 2.20.352, purport, emphasis added)²⁰
- Accepting that you want to take SP as the final evidence, above is what Srila Prabhupada has to say about your evidence system: “*śāstra* is the center for all.” Do you accept this? If yes then your philosophy is defeated. If you don’t, then you have defeated your own philosophy because you do not accept this particular statement of Srila Prabhupada as “conclusive.”
- To know more on this complex topic (harmonizing *śāstras*, *sādhū*, and *gurus* keeping *śāstra* in center and at the same time not minimizing SP), please hear our seminar on this at: www.tinyurl.com/gss-seminar-2019

6. Directly confronting Srila Prabhupada’s stance on some matters

➤ **Watering down SP’s criticism of Caste Goswamis, to legitimize FDGs practiced in apasampradayas**

- p.89-90, the authors quote Srila Prabhupada:

There are many caste *gosvāmīs* who professionally create some disciples who do not care for them or their instructions. Such spiritual masters are satisfied simply to get some material benefits from their disciples. **Such a relationship is condemned by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta**

¹⁹ *atha strīśūdrasaṅkīrṇānirmalāpatitādiṣu | ananyenānyadṛṣṭauca kṛtāpi na kṛtā bhavet ||1.59||
ato ’nyatrāśu vidhivatkartavyā śaraṇāgatiḥ | upadeṣṭā tu mantrasya mūḍhaḥ pracyavate hyadhaḥ ||1.60||*

²⁰ Srila Prabhupada repeats this instruction at many other places. Hear our seminar for more details.

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who calls such spiritual masters and disciples a society of cheaters and cheated.²¹

- Immediately after quoting this, authors water down the criticism by saying:

The above, though, doesn't justify lumping together and branding as heretics all the thousands of individuals who are kin to members of the various parivāras and who received – even as their legal name – the Gosvāmī designation. ...

Imagining that whoever possesses a biological connection with a Vaiṣṇava must be rejected as a deviant jāti-gosāi (caste gosvāmī) appears, frankly speaking, absurd.

- In trying to establish FDGs, the authors dare to speak that what SP and his Guru Maharaja has preached leads to absurdity and thus indirectly they accuse both these ācāryas for absurdity.
- Besides this, authenticity of any practice established in these apa-sampradāyas is always questionable as they have been tagged by our ācāryas as apasampradāyas and thus depending on their practices leave us unprotected. Hence, the burden of proof, if any, should be on pro-FDGs to prove that those FDGs in the caste-gosvami line were bona-fide and that this FDG practice was also bona fide. Until then we should stay away from such practice to be on safe side.
- Here is what Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj says about these FDGs:

But their mantra is dead. ... after Jahnava-devī, the wife of Lord Nityananda, up to Bipin Goswami, from whom Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took initiation, there are so many unknown lady gurus. ... We accept Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, but should we count all those ladies in our disciplic succession? What was their realization?²²

7. The Dīkṣā lineage of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has 3 FDGs

p.91—The authors say:

Another parivāra with women in it – one of particular interest for ISKCON – is the one from Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in which we find eight men and four ladies:

1. (Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu) Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī | 2. Rāmacandra Gosvāmī | 3. Rājavallabha Gosvāmī | 4. Kesavacandra Gosvāmī | 5. Rudresvara Gosvāmī | 6. Dayārāma Gosvāmī | 7. Maheśvarī Gosvāminī | 8. Guṇa-maṇjarī Gosvāminī | 9. Rāmamaṇī Gosvāminī | 10. Yajñeśvara Gosvāmī | 11. Vipina-vihārī Gosvāmī (1850-1919) | 12. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838-1914)

Personally, we have no issue with the above succession. If this lineage was good enough for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (and there is no evidence of him rejecting this lineage at any point), it's good enough for us.

- First of all, note the contradiction in the stance of the authors. On p.40 the authors establish that in case of Suniti, it was family relationship with her son, Dhruva, because of which she could not become his dīkṣā-guru. Being a woman was not the reason. Now here they take examples from caste gosvami dīkṣā lineage in which becoming guru is a family business. They consider it bona fide because it supports their stance.
- If we accept this as bona fide then SB 4.12.32, purport must not mean family relationship but something else—being a woman—as a reason for Suniti's not being dīkṣā-guru. Either way their argument is defeated. This was just a sample to taste the authors' lack of intelligence.

>> Coming back to assessing Bhaktivinoda Thakura's diksa lineage argument:

- FDG supporters say that Bhaktivinoda Thakura (BVT) is known as best of the followers of Rupa Goswami and his diksa-line coming through Bipin Bihari Goswami (BBG) contains 4 VDGs. They say BVT's diksa line cannot be rejected as apasampradaya because he took initiation into it and he never rejected BBG. Instead, BVT adored him in his prayers.

²¹ Cc 2.24.330, purport

²² The full text may be found at the following link: http://www.gosai.com/chaitanya/srila_sridhara_mj/sri_guru/sri_guru_3.html

- However, the fact is that BVT distanced himself from BBG and took shelter of Jagannath Das Babaji and thus connected himself to the Six Gosvamis.²³
- BBGs line is a caste goswami line, which is rejected as an apasampradaya by BVT, SBSST, and SP
- BVT made a chart of his own diksa-line that comes through BBG, and he mentions it is a *siddha-pranali* line (click [here](#) for chart, goto page no.5 of the pdf)
- In NoD 16, **SP rejects *siddha-pranali* as a concoction**²⁴
- Even for argument's sake, if we accept *siddha-pranali* as bona fide, it is not for ISKCON because:
 - It is not established and propagated by BVT, SBSST, and SP
 - Siddha-pranali is for *raganuga sadhakas* while candidates for initiation in ISKCON are on the *vaidhi bhakti* platform; giving them *siddha-pranali* will create havoc
 - Thus, ISKCON's initiation process is pancaratrici not siddha-pranali
- ISKCON's initiation process (as established by BVT, SBSST, & SP) is sufficient to take one from sraddha level to prema level; artificial svarupa-siddhi and meditation not needed; Holy Name form etc. automatically reveals when time comes

Let's see what may happen if we accept caste goswami line argument to allow FDGs:

- As their diksa system is siddha pranali, ISKCON cannot accommodate such system
- So females who want to become diksa-gurus need to take initiation into siddha pranali from current caste goswamis, leaving the shelter of Bhaktivinoda line coming through Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. They may become a part of siddha pranali line followed and propagated by another of Bhaktivinoda's son named Lalitā-prasāda (who had disputes with Bhaktisiddhanta's followers). In anyway, they have to leave ISKCON (or ISKCON will have to leave Srila Prabhupada by allowing siddha pranali)
- However, when they are initiated into caste goswami line, and want to become diksa-gurus, guess what? Caste goswami line allows only those who are born into their lineage to become diksa-guru. So the females who are now "svarupa-siddhas" cannot become diksa-gurus because they are not born in goswami families. "Lost the caste and still remained hungry."
- However, if ISKCON women want to follow siddha pranali but still live in ISKCON, then they need to take ritvik type of initiation imagining their connection with previous caste goswami(nis). Then we have 3-factions: Regular ISKCON followers, Ritvik followers of SP, and Ritvik followers of Caste Goswami(ni)s.

²³ *Gauḍīya* magazine 4.1 (15 August 1925), article "Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Jagannātha," subheading "Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura," page 27

*guror apy avaliptasya kārṇākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate*

A spiritual master who is seen to be inordinately proud, who is not able to distinguish between his prescribed duties and forbidden behavior, and who has strayed from the path of dharma, should be given up. (*Mahābhārata* 5.178.24)

Following the above scriptural injunction and the injunction that one should give up a guru who is inimical to Vaiṣṇavas—*vaiṣṇava-vidveṣī cet parityajya eva* (*Bhakti-sandarbhā* 243)—Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura became indifferent to bad association (*asat-saṅga*) with a sense gratifier and took shelter of Śrī Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, a great personality, the leader among *paramahamsas*.

For more evidence Visit : <https://tinyurl.com/gbc-bureau-feb-2020>

²⁴ "The siddha-pranali process is followed by a class of men ... who have manufactured their own way of devotional service."

8. Allowing FDGs doesn't harm protection of women

When objected that women can't become dīkṣā-gurus because they should be protected, the authors' say:

p.69—The first answer is that disciples and sons are non-different; therefore a woman with disciples would be even more protected.

There is no difference between putra and chatra. Putra means son, and chatra means disciple.

– Lecture on Sri Isopanisad, Los Angeles, 8 July 1971

- This point has also reflected in the current FDG resolution passed by the GBC in Oct 2020 MGM.
- It is lamentable that the authors take shelter of such a baseless logic/trick—extending the comparison to all the aspects of compared objects. This type of trick leads to laughable conclusions. Here are a few examples:
 - SP many times compares disciple with wife and guru with husband. The intended point of comparison is that disciple should surrender to the guru and serve him. But if comparison is extended to all the aspects of husband-wife relation, then the conclusion would be that a male guru can beget a child in female disciple.
 - Ritviks have extended the comparison of “no difference between book bhagavata and person bhagavata” to all aspects and thus they take diksa from book bhagavata
 - Mayavadis have extended comparison of *jīva* and *brahma* being the same to mean there is absolutely no difference.
- Here the son's and disciple's non-difference is stressed in terms of receiving instructions.
- Son's relation with the father is different from that with the mother. In this quote the relation of son with the father is compared ([see full quote](#)). Son receives instruction and protection from the father, while gives protection and instruction to the mother (as Lord Kapila did). However, the authors played a trick with words and equated son's relation with mother to that of disciples' relation with the guru.
- Protection is given to women and children because they have tendency to engage in adharmā; it is protection from adharmā. If FDG's disciples are her sons, then will they give instructions to their guru? Will they also protect their guru from adharmā? It is the guru's (or father's) duty to instruct his disciples and protect them from adharmā, not vice-versa.
- So in case of FDG, her disciples will protect their guru from engaging in adharmā. Lots of Laugh! Oh, that's true—the very fact that they have become FDGs shows they have done adharmā.
- Besides this, out of thousands of statements of SP regarding women's protection, not a single statement speaks about women being protected by her so called “disciples.” Every statement says that she should be protected by father, husband and son (not disciple). For instance:

The demons have now neglected such injunctions, and they think that women should be given as much freedom as men. However, this has not improved the social condition of the world. Actually, a woman should be given protection at every stage of life. **She should be given protection by the father in her younger days, by the husband in her youth, and by the grownup sons in her old age.** This is proper social behavior according to the Manu-saṁhitā.²⁵
- Even in all the Vaiṣṇava, Smārta and Advaita sampradāyas women's role was and is seen as being protected by the father, husband, and son.
- The authors have cleverly developed a whole new theology of “disciples as sons” based on nothing, and sidelined thousands of statements of Srila Prabhupada. But, according to guru (Srila Prabhupada), Sādhū (vaiṣṇava and vedic tradition) and śāstra (Manu-saṁhita etc.), women is to be protected by father, husband, and sons, not by disciples.
- The authors try to cleverly sideline this teaching of guru-sādhū-sastras by saying:

²⁵ Bg. 16.7, purport

Śrīla Prabhupāda often stressed that, “A woman must always be protected, either by her father, by her husband, or by her elderly son.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.14.38, purport) But Śrīla Prabhupāda also explained that **such instruction mostly applies to an “ordinary woman”**:

So to have good population, the women should be very chaste. . . . But if woman is not protected very strictly, it is very difficult . . . **Of course, when woman comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman . . .** So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself . . . Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman.

– Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 1.40, London, 28 July 1973

- Much fun here—cheating revealed: this comes immediately after what is quoted above:

So when we study things from material point of view, these things are to be taken care. But when a man or woman becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he or she takes care of herself or himself. So it is spoken... Arjuna is speaking of ordinary woman. *Strīṣu duṣṭāsu*. Just like adharma-abhibhava. Adharma. **If the woman is trained, a girl is trained from the very beginning that: "You should remain chaste," that is dharma. It is called Satitā dharma. Satī means chastity. There are many stories of Satī, chaste woman. Nala-damayantī. His husband became so poverty-stricken. He was king, but he became later on so poverty-stricken that he had no sufficient cloth. The husband and wife was putting on the same cloth, half and half. So still, still there was no divorce. You see. Still the woman did not consider... She was also king's daughter. But the husband has fallen down to so much poverty-stricken condition. "So why shall I live with him?" These are some of the extreme examples of chastity.**

- So what SP intended here is that a woman who has become Krishna Consciousness, be trained in chastity. However, the authors cunningly concealed this part of SP's speech and tried to establish that Krishna Conscious women don't need protection. Which means they need not marry also, which directly goes against what SP is establishing here. Thus the truncation. It will be a good fun to go through the whole lecture. SP untiringly establishes that women need protection; but the authors cleverly cut out all other parts and present a few statements stitched together to prove the opposite.²⁶ This exposes their intellectual cunningness and also that they have found no better statements in SP's instructions than this to establish that SP supported devotee women to be self-protected.
- Also, if the authors still think that “they are not ordinary women,” is applicable to all women in ISKCON, then the men in ISKCON (who they so much accuse) are not ordinary as well. Then why do both males and females in ISKCON fall down? Internet search result yielded some prominent ladies (even GBC) involved in illicit sex, run brothels, become drug addicts, satan worship etc. Details are available at: <https://ghqredux.wordpress.com/2017/10/29/ghq-redux-2017/>. I suggest to read through it patiently as it is a long article but is very informative about ISKCON's “not ordinary women” history.

9. Authority of Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā as Nārada-pañcarātra

- Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā has answers to all questions regarding the FDG issue, which has been established in a book “Vaiṣṇava-dikṣa according to Narada-pancaratra,” authored by Damodara Dasa and Krishna Kirti Dasa, published in 2019 by the Bhakti Vikasa Books Trust.²⁷
- However, it seems that when they published their book the authors did not know about Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā (which we doubt due to some evidences not revealable here²⁸).

²⁶ There are precedencies of the use of such tactics among ISKCON devotees. A prominent member of SAC is accused of such mal-practices. See more: <https://urmiladasi.wordpress.com/2015/09/26/urmila-and-the-3rd-ellipsis/>

²⁷ Soft copy available here: <https://archive.org/details/VDNAP>

²⁸ As shown here, if they can cut out SP statements, they can easily cut out the full scripture which is not so famous.

- Ever since “Vaiṣṇava-dikṣa according to Narada-pancarātra,” book was published, there are a lot of rumors and hot debates floating around in ISKCON circles, and some scholarly person(s) have dubbed *Bharadvāja-saṁhitā* as not authorized or not applicable to ISKCON. Care has to be exercised on the part of these devotees, since deriding *Bharadvāja-saṁhitā* is akin to criticizing *Narada-pañcarātra*, which only accounts for *śruti-śāstra-nindanam*.
- SP says that “the original speaker of” pañcarātra “scriptures is Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” “liberated sages like Nārada and Vyāsa, who are free from four defects of conditioned souls are the propagators of these scriptures,” “these scriptures are not products of the modes of passion and ignorance” and “are recognized Vedic scriptures that have been accepted by the great ācāryas.” (Cc 1.5.41, purport)
- According to Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Navadvipa-dhama-mahatmya, 13.23, *Narada-pañcarātra* is a collection of *saṁhitās*, which are the instructions of Nārada Muni to five Ṛṣis (Śaṇḍilya, Upagāyana, Maunjāyana, **Bharadvāja**, and Kauśika).
- Just like Vedas are divided into four divisions, ṛg-yajuḥ-sāma-atharva-ākhyāḥ, each Veda is further divided into śākhās or branches,²⁹ for instance, when we say Taittiriya-saṁhitā that refers to kṛṣṇa-yajuḥ-veda, similarly all saṁhitās, including Bharadvāja-saṁhitā, are very much part of Narada-pañcarātra. When we refer to Bharadvāja-saṁhitā, we are referring to Nārada-pañcarātra only.
- When there is reference to pāñcarātrikī vidhi, the Nārada Pañcarātra is perhaps the most important pañcarātra. “And still, we are also following Nārada Muni’s path, Nārada Pañcarātra,” says Śrīla Prabhupāda. “Our method is Nārada Pañcarātra.”³⁰ And the famous saṁhitā of Nārada Pañcarātra is the Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā (BS).
- Besides this, there are many references by our ācāryas as well as Srila Prabhupada:
 - SB 4.31.10, Purport, mentions the BS as an evidence for considering varṇa by qualities.
 - An article in the Gauḍīya magazine (published in Bengali by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his disciples) entitled “Smārtavāda” mentions the BS among the spiritual devotional smṛti texts (*sātvata-smṛti-śāstra*) along with Hari-bhakti-vilāsa and Sadācāra-smṛti (by Madhvācārya), etc.
 - Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī’s commentaries to Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (1.8.7) and Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī also quote it, and the verses quoted are matching with the version of BS Vaiṣṇava-dikṣa book has used.³¹

10. The Suniti Argument

p.38-40—the authors start to analyze SB 4.12.32, purport. They claim:

➤ Real reason for her not being dikṣa-guru was being realted with him as mother, and not being a woman

- If so, then it speculates a rule that one with direct family relation cannot become dikṣa-guru
- However, then our guru parampara is null and void—Nārada is Lord Brahma’s son, Brahmā is Lord Narayana’s son. Vivasvān initiated his son Vaivasvata Manu (Bg 4.1). There are numerous instances of father initiating his son in Vedic tradition
- Even Srila Prabhupada says in Bg 6.42, purport

It is especially the case in the ācārya or gosvāmī families. Such families are very learned and devoted by tradition and training, and thus they become spiritual masters. In India there are

At this link: <https://www.harekrṣṇa.com/sun/editorials/02-15/editorials12588.htm> , is published an article (in 5 parts) which thoroughly and scholarly pulverizes pro-FDG arguments. This article provides the same evidences from Bharadvāja-saṁhitā which we have provided. Although it was published in Feb 2015, we have a secret information that it was published by one of the team members of the authors, but in alias name.

²⁹ Ṛg-veda has 21 śākhās, Yajur-veda has in total 101 śākhās but these 101 are grouped in two broad categories as śukla-yajuḥ and kṛṣṇa-yajuḥ. Katyayana, Kanva and Madhyandina belong to śukla-yajuḥ and Maitrayani, Taittiriya (or Āpastamba), Hiranyakeshin, Kapisthala and Katha belong to kṛṣṇa-yajuḥ. Sāma-veda has 1000 śākhās and Atharva-veda has 9 śākhās.

³⁰ Lecture, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.24—August 5, 1974, Vṛndāvana.

³¹ For detailed references goto Online version of Vaiṣṇava-dikṣa book: www.archive.org/details/VDNAP

many such *ācārya* families, but they have now degenerated due to insufficient education and training.

- Thus, being in family relation doesn't have anything to do with being diksa-guru.

➤ **Suniti was in Satya yuga where women were not allowed to become diksa-guru. Now, no problem.**

- Women from Satya yuga were not eligible to become diksa-guru, but we, the great women of kali-yuga, are eligible to become diksa-gurus ! All glories to the Women's Liberation Movement. (Sarcasm intended). Such a puffed-up speculation.
- Has SP mentioned any such thing in the purport? No.
- Then is there any rule that his purports are meant for Satya-yuga only? No, the opposite is true. These are meant for next 10,000 years.
- Then is there some mention that Srimad-bhagavatam is meant for Satya-yuga? No, the opposite is mentioned: persons "in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purana."
- Then how do we come to conclusion that the information in the above purport is not meant for us?
- Oh. Okay. By getting revelation from the erstwhile "women's ministry."
- There is no mention of diksa-gurus or siksa-gurus in the verse. Still SP specifically brings this issue in the purport. If he did not mean it for us, why would he bring up this controversial issue at all?

➤ **p.40-41—Suniti's case was in Satya-yuga, when initiation method followed was Vaidika wherein women didn't even get initiation what to speak of becoming guru. However, now in pancaratika method women can get initiation and thus they can give also.**

- It is a misconception that there was no pāñcarātrika initiation in satya-yuga (although vaidika was prominent). In fact **Dhruva Maharaja got pāñcarātrika initiation.**³² He was initiated into a *pāñcarātrika* mantra (*dvādaśākṣara* mantra) "**oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya.**" Ācāryas (in their commentaries to SB 4.8.54) say that it is a mantra from vaiṣṇava-tantras, which are known as pancaratras (see SB 10.8.45, synonyms). Reason: because Dhruva's age was only 5 years while Kṣatriya becomes eligible for upanayana only after 10 years age. In the Haribhakti-vilāsa (126-128), Sanātana Gosvami clarifies in reference to the *dvādaśākṣara* mantra that Dhruva Maharaja was initiated into this. In SB 4.8.52, purport (just a sloka before Dhruva's initiation), SP mentions that this method of worship is pancaratika, which means he knew it.
- Thus, legitimately concluded: SP says that Suniti could not initiate Dhruva Maharaja (even in pancaratika vidhi), because she was a woman.
- Over and above this explanation, the Nārada Pañcarātra itself prohibits woman from becoming diksa-gurus, although it allows them to get initiation and also to impart basic instructions to others.³³ This is exactly in line with what SP says in his purport to SB 4.12.32.

➤ **That Suniti could not become Dhruva's diksa-guru is merely a description of an incident that took place in bygone ages. It is a "descriptive" statement and not the "prescriptive" one for ISKCON to follow.**

- According to the authors' understanding, the prescriptive statement means a statement that directly prescribes action: "Every devotee must regularly attend Mangala Arati." In descriptive statement no action is prescribed: "Kauteya Das regularly attends Mangala Arati."
- The authors opine that unless some action is prescribed, it is not necessarily meant to be followed. Thus, because in Suniti's case, SP doesn't prescribe it for ISKCON, it is not meant to be followed.
- However, this argument is based on Karma-mimamsa philosophy and is thoroughly refuted by the Vedānta Sūtras. Baladeva Vidyabhūṣaṇa in Govinda-bhāṣya (1.1.1.3), argues that if a trustworthy person informs a poor man of a hidden treasure in his house and a means to find it, that information, though not prescriptive, is sufficient to generate action in him for his benefit.

³² See detailed research article here: https://guru-sādhya-sastra.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_36.html

³³ na jātu mantra-dā nārī....; nārhanṭyācāryatām kvacit...; bodhayeyur-hitāhitam....; striyaścāntarajas-tathā sarve\pi prapadyeran sarva-dhārāram-acyutam.

To this objection we reply, that it is an erroneous action to think that the Vedanta text is useless; simply because it does not teach any action. Though there is no direct teaching of any command or prohibition in it, yet in as much as it teaches the existence of God, who is the highest end of man; it has a utility of its own; like the sentences ‘there is wealth in your house,’ etc. As a man who thought that he was a pauper and so felt miserable, gets happiness when some trustworthy person tells him that there is a great hidden treasure in his house; and as the attainment of that treasure then becomes the object of his life. (translation by Srisa Candra Vasu)³⁴

- Below SP derives the moral rule that we should not “make one-sided attempts to win the struggle for existence” from a description of Hiraṇyakaśipu’s futile materialistic activities:

The whole point here is that even Hiraṇyakaśipu, the most powerful of materialists, **could not become deathless by his various plans**. What, then, can be accomplished by the tiny Hiraṇyakaśipus of today, whose plans are thwarted from moment to moment? **Śrī Īśopaniṣad instructs us not to** make one-sided attempts to win the struggle for existence. (Iso 11, ppt)

- Therefore, descriptive statements form the basis of our action. Thus, the knowledge mentioned in SB 4.12.32, purport: being woman, one cannot become *dīkṣā-guru*, becomes the basis of our action to be taken.
- Besides this, it is to be noted that the authors themselves freely use descriptive statements wherever they support FDGs. This exposes “hypocrisy” on their part. For instance:

Being initiated by women is neither new nor confined to interactions between humans. Even Lord Brahmā, the head of our sampradāya, at one point was initiated by a “woman,” a divine feminine personality. As he described in his Brahma-saṁhitā (5.23-24), ... Then the goddess of learning Sarasvatī, the divine consort of the Supreme Lord, said thus to Brahmā who saw nothing but gloom in all directions, “O Brahmā, this mantra, viz., *klīm kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāhā*, will assuredly fulfill your heart’s desire.”

- Where in the above quote from Brahma-saṁhitā is the prescription that “women should bestow mantras to men.” Still the authors hypocritically use this as their evidence.

³⁴ *tatrāha na khalu tāvad vedānta-vākya-gaṇaḥ prayoga-yogyāḥ siddhārtha-bodhakatvena prayojana-śūnyatvāt, sapta-dvīpāvasundharety ādi vākyavat | pravṛtti-nivṛtti-rūpa-sādhārtha-bodhakāni vākyāni prayojanavattvāt prayoga-yogyāni dṛṣṭāni | ... sarva-kāmo yajeta, surām na pibed iti vede ca | ... brahma khalu pariniṣpannam vastu | tad-bodhakasya satyaṁ jñānam anantam ity ādi-vākyaṣya tac-chūnyatvān na tad-yogyatvam | ... āmnāyasya kriyārthatvād ānarthakyam atad-arthānām tasmād anityatvam ucyate*
maivam bhramitavyam | pravṛtti-nivṛtti-bodhakatā-virāhe’pi parama-pumartha-rūpa-brahmāstitva-bodhanenaiva tasya tadvattvāt nidhi-sattāvabodhaka-vākyavat | yathā tvad-grhe nidhir astīty āpta-vākyaṭ tat-prāpty-eka-lakṣaṇaḥ pum-arthas

(Objection): They (vedanta statements) are something like mere descriptive passages of the Vedas or other subjects: such as the sentences ‘the world consists of the seven continents,’ &c. Only those passages of the Vedas are relevant which direct something to be done or something not to be done. ... In the Vedas we find commands and prohibitions such as, “Let a man who desires heaven, perform sacrifice,” “Let no man drink wine.” ... Therefore passages like “brahman is true, intelligence,” &c. are useless, because they do not aim at teaching any particular action. ...

āmnāyasya kriyārthatvādānarthakyamatadanarthānām | (pū. mī. 1.2:1)

“As the purport of a scripture is action, those scriptural passages whose purport is not action, are purportless.”

(Answer): To this objection we reply, that it is an erroneous action to think that the Vedanta text is useless; simply because it does not teach any action. Though there is no direct teaching of any command or prohibition in it, yet in as much as it teaches the existence of God, who is the highest end of man; it has a utility of its own; like the sentences ‘there is wealth in your house,’ &c. As a man who thought that he was a pauper and so felt miserable, gets happiness when some trustworthy person tells him that there is a great hidden treasure in his house; and as the attainment of that treasure then becomes the object of his life.